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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Patent No. 7,438,847 :
Clune et al. :
Issue Date: October 21, 2008 : DECISION ON APPLICATION
Application No. 10/803,682 : FOR
Filed: March 18, 2004 : PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT
Attorney Docket No. 05918-246001 / :
7050

This is in response to the "APPLICATION FOR PATENT TERM ADJUSTMENT UNDER 37 CFR § 1.705(d)," filed December 8, 2008, requesting that the patent term adjustment determination for the above-identified patent be changed from nine hundred eighty-six (986) days to one thousand two hundred thirty-one (1231) days.

The request for reconsideration is **DISMISSED**.

Patentees are given **TWO (2) MONTHS** to respond to this decision. No extensions of time will be granted under § 1.136(a).

On October 21, 2008, the above-identified application matured into US Patent No. 7,438,847 with a patent term adjustment of 986 days. This request for reconsideration of patent term adjustment was timely filed within two months of the issue date of the patent. See 1.705(d).

The Office acknowledges submission of the \$200.00 fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.18(e). No additional fees are required.

Patentees request recalculation of the patent term adjustment based on the decision in Wyeth v. Dudas, 580 F. Supp. 2d 138, 88 U.S.P.Q. 2d 1538 (D.D.C. 2008). Patentees assert that pursuant to Wyeth, a PTO delay under §154(b)(1)(A) overlaps with a delay under §154(b)(1)(B) only if the delays "occur on the same day."

Patentees argue that the period of adjustment due to the Three Year Delay by the Office, pursuant to 37 CFR § 1.703(b), is 583 days. This 583 day period is calculated based on the application having been filed under 35 U.S.C. §111(a) on March 18, 2004, and the patent having not issued until October 21, 2008, three years and 583 days later. Patentees assert that in addition to this 583 day period, they are entitled to a period of adjustment due to examination delay, pursuant to 37 CFR §1.702(a), of 1,007 days for the failure by the Office to mail at least one of a notification under 35 U.S.C. 132 not later than fourteen months after the date on which the application was filed under 35 U.S.C. 111(a), pursuant to § 1.702(a)(1). A non-final rejection as mailed on February 19, 2008, 14 months and 1,007 days after the application was filed.

Under 37 CFR § 1.703(f), Patentees are entitled to a period of patent term adjustment equal to the period of delays based on the grounds set forth in 37 CFR §1.702 reduced by the period of time equal to the period of time during which Patentees failed to engage in reasonable efforts to conclude prosecution pursuant to 37 CFR §1.704. In other words, the period of Office delay reduced by the period of applicant delay. Patentees do not dispute the period of reduction of 21 days for applicant delay. Patentees assert that the total period of Office delay is the sum of the period of Three Years Delay (583 days) and the period of Examination Delay (1,007 days) **to the extent that these periods of delay are not overlapping.**

Patentees contend that a portion, 338 days, of the 14 month examination delay of 1,007 days (May 19, 2005 to February 19, 2008) overlaps the 583 days of the Three Year Delay period (March 19, 2007 to October 21, 2008). Accordingly, Patentees submit that the total period of Office Delay is 1,252 days, which is the sum of the period of Three Year Delay (583 days) and the period of Examination Delay (1,007 days), reduced by the period of overlap (338 days). See p. 3 of petition.

As such, Patentees assert entitlement to a patent term adjustment of 1,231 days (583 + 1,007 reduced by 338 overlap - 21 (applicant delay)).

The Office agrees that the patent issued 3 years and 583 days after its filing date. The Office agrees that the action detailed above was not taken within the specified time frame, and thus, the entry of period of adjustment of 1,007 days is

correct. At issue is whether Patentees should accrue 245 days (adjusted for overlap, per Patentees' calculations) of patent term adjustment for the Office taking in excess of three years to issue the patent, as well as, 1,007 days for Office failure to take a certain action within a specified time frame (or examination delay).

The Office contends that 583 days overlap. Patentees' interpretation of the period of overlap has been considered and found to be incorrect. Patentees' calculation of the period of overlap is inconsistent with the Office's interpretation of this provision. 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) limits the adjustment of patent term, as follows:

to the extent that the periods of delay attributable to grounds specified in paragraph (1) overlap, the period of any adjustment granted under this subsection shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

Likewise, 37 CFR 1.703(f) provides that:

To the extent that periods of delay attributable to the grounds specified in §1.702 overlap, the period of adjustment granted under this section shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed.

As explained in *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, 69 Fed. Reg. 34283 (June 21, 2004), the Office interprets 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) as permitting either patent term adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A)(i)-(iv), or patent term adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), but not as permitting patent term adjustment under both 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(A)(i)-(iv) and 154(b)(1)(B). Accordingly, the Office implements the overlap provision as follows:

If an application is entitled to an adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), the entire period during which the application was pending (except for periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)), and not just the period beginning three years after the actual filing date of the application, is the period of delay under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay

overlap under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). Thus, any days of delay for Office issuance of the patent more than 3 years after the filing date of the application, which overlap with the days of patent term adjustment accorded prior to the issuance of the patent will not result in any additional patent term adjustment. See 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A), and 37 CFR § 1.703(f). See *Changes to Implement Patent Term Adjustment Under Twenty Year Term; Final Rule*, 65 Fed. Reg. 54366 (Sept. 18, 2000). See also *Revision of Patent Term Extension and Patent Term Adjustment Provisions; Final Rule*, 69 Fed. Reg. 21704 (April 22, 2004), 1282 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 100 (May 18, 2004). See also *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, 69 Fed. Reg. 34283 (June 21, 2004).

The current wording of § 1.703(f) was revised in response to the misinterpretation of this provision by a number of Patentees. The rule was slightly revised to more closely track the corresponding language of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). The relevant portion differs only to the extent that the statute refers back to provisions of the statute whereas the rule refers back to sections of the rule. This was not a substantive change to the rule nor did it reflect a change of the Office's interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A). As stated in the *Explanation of 37 CFR 1.703(f) and of the United States Patent and Trademark Office Interpretation of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A)*, the Office has consistently taken the position that if an application is entitled to an adjustment under the three-year pendency provision of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B), the entire period during which the application was pending before the Office (except for periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)), and not just the period beginning three years after the actual filing date of the application, is the relevant period under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay "overlap" under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A).

This interpretation is consistent with the statute. Taken together the statute and rule provide that to the extent that periods of delay attributable to grounds specified in 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1) and in corresponding §1.702 overlap, the period of adjustment granted shall not exceed the actual number of days the issuance of the patent was delayed. The grounds specified in these sections cover the A) guarantee of prompt Patent and

Trademark Office responses, B) guarantee of no more than 3 year application pendency, and C) guarantee or adjustments for delays due to interference, secrecy orders and appeals. A section by section analysis of 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) specifically provides that:

Section 4402 imposes limitations on restoration of term. In general, pursuant to [35 U.S.C.] 154(b)(2)(A)-(C), total adjustments granted for restorations under [35 U.S.C. 154](b)(1) are reduced as follows: (1) To the extent that there are multiple grounds for extending the term of a patent that may exist simultaneously (e.g., delay due to a secrecy order under [35 U.S.C.] 181 and administrative delay under [35 U.S.C.] 154(b)(1)(A)), the term should not be extended for each ground of delay but only for the actual number of days that the issuance of a patent was delayed; See 145 Cong. Rec. S14,718¹

As such, the period for over 3 year pendency does not overlap only to the extent that the actual dates in the period beginning three years after the date on which the application was filed overlap with the actual dates in the periods for failure of the Office to take action within specified time frames. In other words, consideration of the overlap does not begin three years after the filing date of the application. Treating the relevant period as starting on March 19, 2007, the date that is 3 years after the actual filing date of the application is incorrect.

In this instance, the relevant period under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B) in determining whether periods of delay "overlap" under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(2)(A) is the entire period during which the application was pending before the Office, March 18, 2004 to October 21, 2008. (There were no periods excluded under 35 U.S.C. 154(b)(1)(B)(i)-(iii)). During that time, the issuance of the patent was delayed by 1007 days, not 1007 + 245 days. The Office took 14 months and 1007 days to issue a first Office action. Otherwise, the Office took all actions set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 1.702(a) within the prescribed timeframes. Nonetheless, given the initial 1007 days of Office delay and the 21 days of applicant delay and the time allowed within the

¹ The AIPA is title IV of the Intellectual Property and Communications Omnibus Reform Act of 1999 (S. 1948), which was incorporated and enacted as law as part of Pub. L. 106-113. The Conference Report for H.R. 3194, 106th Cong. 1st Sess. (1999), which resulted in Pub. L. 106-113, does not contain any discussion (other than the incorporated language) of S. 1948. A section-by-section analysis of S. 1948, however, was printed in the Congressional Record at the request of Senator Lott, See 145 Cong. Rec. S14,708-26 (1999) (daily ed. Nov. 17, 1999).

timeframes for processing and examination, the patent issued, three years and 583 days after its filing date. The Office did not delay 1007 days and then an additional 583 days. Accordingly, 1007 days of patent term adjustment (not 1007 and 583 days) was properly entered since the period of delay of 583 days attributable to the delay in the issuance of the patent overlaps with the adjustment of 1007 days attributable to grounds specified in § 1.702(a)(1). Entry of both periods is not warranted. 1007 days is determined to be the actual number of days that the issuance of the patent was delayed, considering the 583 days over three years. Accordingly, at issuance, the Office properly entered 0 additional days of patent term adjustment specifically for the Office taking in excess of 3 years to issue the patent.

Accordingly, no additional patent term was entered for Office delay in issuing the patent.

In view thereof, the Office affirms that the correct determination of patent term adjustment at the time of the issuance of the patent is 986 (1007 - 21) days.

Telephone inquiries specific to this matter should be directed to Shirene Willis Brantley, Senior Petitions Attorney, at (571) 272-3230.



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